



# The Big Dog Newsletter



BCO 3/172

(MTN)

## “ASCEND TO VICTORY”



The Bravo Company marathoneers.

From left to right: CPT Lyon, PV2 “Happy” Gilmore, SGT Chappelow, SGT York

Happy Easter, and warmest MTN CO greetings from Iraq! We are still settling in here at Camp Adder; getting familiar with our new environment and more comfortable with our mission. We are quickly establishing ourselves as a force to be reckoned with; doing everything that it takes to triumph no matter what challenge presents itself. We are optimistic, motivated, and feeling good about where we are and what we are doing. The temperature has been creeping up near 100 degrees the past couple of weeks and the value of knowing which buildings offer good air conditioning has never been more apparent. There have been some very impressive sand storms, lightning storms, and even one very bizarre storm that tossed mud wildly through the air in every direction including straight up. Be assured though, that when the snow starts flying and the temperature drops below 20 the boys from Maine will be ready.

### *JUST FYI...*

\*\*\* We have accomplished a lot in the short time we have been here. Through our own ingenuity and with the skillful, motivated laborers that we inherited from every county in the State we have already expanded our territory by leaps and bounds. We have built a new operations center (not being content with the shack that we inherited), re-organized and rejuvenated our vehicles by adding several creature comfort and some common-sense items to them. One item that has been particularly popular with our “vertically challenged” soldiers

is a small box that the gunners can stand on inside the cab in order to be at the right level when they are in the turret. We have also “acquired” a myriad of extra equipment, building materials and some additional vehicles to ensure we will have all the tools necessary to succeed. As of yet there really has not been an obstacle that we have not been able to overcome. When opportunity doesn’t knock, we just build doors or send SGT Otis to look for it.

\*\*\* Just this last Saturday the camp put on its own version of the Boston Marathon. Hundreds of soldiers from dozens of units and representing dozens of countries from around the world entered the 26 mile race. Of all the soldiers that entered the race no other group entered it quite the way the MTN CO did. Instead of running in the traditional running outfit and sneakers, our marathoners chose to stick to the more traditional Infantry style. Picture, if you will, hundreds of soldiers dressed in running outfits crouched at the starting line awaiting the sound of the signal to start. Above the crowd of nervous runners a blue guidon with Infantry Cross Rifles and the numbers “172” emblazoned upon it flaps wildly in the wind. Carrying that guidon is a soldier wearing combat boots, the full DCU (Desert Camouflage Uniform), carrying a 35 lb rucksack and holding his personal weapon at the ready. As the whistle sounds it is even more remarkable to see this same soldier start the marathon at a trot and begin to pass the more traditional runners. The Four soldiers in the above picture each ran a 6 or 7 mile length of the race and finished in less than 6 hours. This was a remarkable feat in many ways, but seeing that we were the only ones to run in full combat mode was the most memorable. Spectators stood by in wonder as the new kids on the block showed Camp Adder the true meaning of endurance and motivation. The Mountain Company is definitely making its mark in Iraq!

\*\*\* Our convoy missions have been keeping us very busy. Your soldier is being asked to perform some very difficult tasks and is doing it to the highest standard and without complaint. The only vocal complaining happens when a convoy commander finds out from higher that his mission has been cancelled for one reason or another. You can tell a MTN CO soldier he has an hour to get ready and may be on the road for three days, but don’t tell him that his mission has just been cancelled. Our soldiers do not like to just sit around and watch TV, they want to be performing the mission they have been trained to do. We like what we do and take pride in how we do it! All of the soldiers are truly remarkable and at this point everyone has forgotten what unit they may have come from; they are all MTN CO soldiers now!

### *Taking a break...*

~ Charlie Daniels put on a concert here at Camp Adder. It was well attended and time well spent. Although, he may be getting on in age Mr. Daniels can still put on a show. Several die hard fans including SGT York and CPT Lyon could be heard singing along with Charlie no matter what song he played. The band concluded their performance with the crowd favorite *The Devil went down to Georgia*. The crowd erupted in wild cheers as the band played that familiar tune and sang loudly along with the band. It was great to see even the youngest soldiers from the MTN CO take part and enjoy the show that the aging man put on.

~On Easter Sunday there were worship services held at the ancient city of UR. It was a memorable experience for guys to stand in the same place that Abraham stood thousands of years before. The city (which was uncovered by archaeologists at the beginning of the last century) is a mere stones throw from our living area. There is a tour offered once a week by a local whose grandfather was part of the original archaeological dig. He is definitely a knowledgeable guide, so your soldier has no excuse if he returns home and isn’t a subject matter expert on the ancient city of UR.

~ When our soldiers are not out on the road, preparing to go out on the road, or cleaning up after coming off the road, they are enjoying the other things that Camp Adder has to offer. We are expecting to have internet hooked up in our trailers by the end of May which will open the lines of communication even more with our families back home. Most soldiers have modified their rooms by building shelves or re-arranging the set-up to their own liking. Everyone is feeling better having a little more privacy and comfort, and not having to live in a tent any more.

~ It is truly an amazing thing to see these soldiers from every county in the State and from almost every unit within the MEARNG come together like they do. Other than maybe a thick French accent or a call over the radio of "On the Way" it is hard to tell which ones are originally MTN CO members and which ones have been cross leveled. As I look at the groups hanging out or working together I don't see soldiers from the 152 hanging out with soldiers from the 152 or MTN CO with MTN CO. I see a team of soldiers working together regardless of what unit they came from. This unit has truly come together and it is an amazing bond we have created in such a short time.

~ At any one moment if you were to look in our motor pool you would see MTN CO soldiers busy improving their situations. Your soldiers are busy during all times of the day making life easier and safer for themselves and their buddies. From the step up boxes in the trucks to rewiring an old abandoned coffin-style freezer so that they can have ice-cold water while they work in the baking sun. It is remarkable to watch these soldiers look at something and figure out a way to make it work even better. We have some very talented and motivated carpenters in this unit. If you need something built you just need to run it by one of them and when they get a chance they will build it for you. I would personally like to thank SGT Norris, SFC Doyon, SSG Cyr, and PV2 McKenney for the work they did on our new operations center. -XO-

#### ***What you can do...***

→Your soldier just moved into his new room. He has plenty of wall space that will need to be covered up with pictures of his loved ones from home. Sending pictures is a great way to bring a little piece of Maine into your soldier's life.

→Look for interesting newspaper or magazine articles that your soldier would be interested in reading and send them along.

→Collect info about what is going on in Iraq, especially as it pertains to service members from Maine. Start compiling things now with the aim of making a scrapbook when it's all over.

→Get involved with the family support group and stay connected to other families of deployed soldiers. Keep your friends and your community updated on how your soldier is doing.

#### ***Note from the XO***

Hello friends and family members of Mountain Company soldiers! I would like to address a situation as it is becoming more and more of a concern to several of our family members. As most of you know, much to our dismay, we were forced to send a platoon to Baghdad. Due to poor communication, mostly the lack of internet connections for personal use, we have been unable to include any news from our third platoon brothers as of yet. We are desperately trying to correct this problem and we hope to feature some stories, messages, pictures and eventually some bios of our third platoon brothers in future Newsletters. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter feel free to email me at the following email address: [mtnxo@yahoo.com](mailto:mtnxo@yahoo.com). Keep in mind I may not be able to answer some questions due



to security restrictions but if I can answer it I will try my best. Thank you all for your continued support!

1LT Donald L Lachapelle



## Spotlight on the soldier. . .

**Name:** SSG Robert Masterman

**Plt/Sqd:** 1/1

**Position:** Squad Leader

**Original Unit:** B CO 3/172 INF (MTN)

**Time in service:** 8 years

**Civilian Occupation:** Manager in a financial planning / investment office

## Q & A

**SSG Masterman, why did you join the Army?** *I joined the Army for a variety of reasons. I needed a change in my life and the military seemed like a really interesting option. I was also attracted to the educational benefits that the Army had to offer.*

**What long term goals do you have in the military?** *That's hard to say at this point. I would like to stay in and make Sergeant Major, but I am taking things one enlistment at a time.*

**What is your favorite thing about B Co?** *It is remarkable to see the enthusiasm that the guys have. Everyone really wants to be here and it shows. You don't find this in other units. There is a brotherhood in the Mountain Company that is not easy to find anywhere else.*

**What will you do when you get back to Maine?** *I will take a little bit of time off, but essentially it's back to business as usual.*

**What is it that keeps you going every day?** *I believe in the rightness of what we are doing. Being here, seeing the country side and people only serves to reaffirm that belief in my mind. Knowing that I am here not only for the good of the U.S. but also for the good of the Iraqi people makes it very easy to stay motivated and determined to succeed at all costs.*

**What is the most challenging part of your job?** *I enjoy what I do and it comes naturally to me. I know that I can be hard on some of my guys because I pay strict attention to detail, so it's a challenge to make sure they know that I have their best interest in mind.*

# Message Board

A Very happy 8<sup>th</sup> birthday to Lindsay. –SSG Kirk Cyr

To my beautiful wife Maritza, Happy Anniversary! –Love James

Julia Freeman, I wish you luck in your recovery. –Love Uncle Jason

Happy Birthday Dad, Beth, and Serena! –Love son, brother, & Uncle David.

Dear Tammy, I just wanted to wish you a wonderful Mothers day. Always know that you are in my thoughts and in my heart. –Love John



**SPC Gibson and PFC Kavin at the Easter worship service**